THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The extent of damage to the agricultural products due to flood, drought etc. depend on the intensity of the disaster. In 2002-03 several States of the country were affected by drought as a result of which the production of foodgrains declined sharply from 212.85 million tonnes in 2001-02 to 174.19 million tonnes in 2002-03. Similarly, the production of oilseeds declined from 20.66 million tonnes in 2001-02 to 15.06 million tonnes in 2002-03. As regards floods, the damage to crops area in 2003-04 was about 37 lakh hectares which was 2.28% of the net sown area in the country.

In India due to certain inadequate post-harvest techniques for cleaning grading, drying, packaging transportation and storage a large amount of agricultural produce gets destroyed every year.

At present, no authoritative estimates of post-harvest losses in various agricultural sector are available. Efforts have been initiated by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Directorate of Market Inspection, Ministry of Agriculture, Nagpur to assess the Post Harvest Losses. However, on the basis of the general post-harvest loss estimates available with the ICAR, as presented in the 2nd International Agronomy Congress, 2002 and other studies, the extent of annual post-harvest losses in various commodities are as follow:—

(i) For grains the losses are about 10%

(ii) For pulses the losses are about 15%

(iii) For fruits the losses are about 30%

(iv) For vegetable the losses are about 30%

(v) For floriculture the losses are about 40%

Precision farming

1857. DR. K. KASTURIRANGAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning to conduct experiments in precision farming towards maximising agriculture productivity;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any time-frame has been set to take such experiments to operational capability; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. Development of precision farming techniques and practices for increasing agricultural productivity is one of the priority research areas of ICAR.

(b) to (d) The ICAR institutes and State Agricultural Universities are conducting on-station and on-farm experiments on precision techniques such as laser land leveling, site specific nutrient management, precision seed application systems, precision irrigation systems and leaf colour charts etc. to enhance productivity through efficient management of inputs. Under on-farm experiments, yield advantage of 5 to 10% and irrigation water saving to the tune of 25 to 30% has been achieved with laser land leveling. A Mission Mode project on precision farming was sanctioned under NATP programme with lead centre at Project Directorate on Croping Systems Research, Modipuram, Meerut to develop precision management strategies for rice-wheat systems. Such research is from a long perspective and therefore of a continuous nature in different forms.

Reforms in agriculture sector of Orissa

1858. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have committed to bring a complete reform in the agriculture sector of Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the National Horticulture Project that is proposed to be launched in the State; and

(d) the other measures Government propose to evolve to help the beleaguered paddy farmers of the State from the clutches of the middlemen?